

EDITOR'S CONFERENCE REPORT*

James W. Markham

Davidson Library

University of California, Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9010

E-mail: markham@library.ucsb.edu

The International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC) and its affiliate, the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres (EURASLIC) met for the 27th Annual IAMSLIC Conference and the 9th EURASLIC Conference in Brest, France, October 14-19, 2001. In attendance were 129 people from 43 countries, including 43 from France, 25 from U.S.A., mostly from California or Massachusetts, and 9 from England. Because this conference was in Europe, a number of Europeans were able to attend their first IAMSLIC Conference. Among countries represented were Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Mongolia, Philippines, Russia, South Africa, and Tanzania. Conference participants represented a great range of libraries, including one-person, marine-station libraries in isolated locations, academic and institutional libraries in developing countries, libraries in large research institutions, and large academic libraries.

Under the general theme "Managing Resources in a Sea of Change", following the opening reception on Sunday evening, there were 3 days of contributed and invited papers and panel discussions, as well as a session of brief oral summaries of posters displayed. Topics presented and discussed included current awareness, digital library projects, document imaging, and internet and intranet systems. A panel discussion on institutional leadership by librarians showed that many aquatic science librarians are very much involved in planning and leadership beyond the library and hold positions of influence, including chair of the university academic assembly; president of the state library association; and marine science vocabulary source for the OED.

A keynote speaker on managing resources spoke of the hybrid library, which manages both e-resources and books, emphasizing the value of metadata, and discussing the move from authentication to authorization, and the problems that license agreements have with remote users, noting that we now need systems that tell us as much about users as collections. Other invited speakers discussed copyright in the E.U.; e-journals in France; an experimental platform integrating network distribution of document searching functions, online full-text, and control of access and printing; and virtual libraries and business models in scholarly publishing. Other papers described library participation in a long-term monitoring project, in which the librarian provided metadata enrichment of the primary documents; a project mapping ASFA thesaurus terms to DDC; a large in-house document-imaging project; scholarly publishing and the fact that authors do not tend to distinguish between societal and commercial publishers when deciding where to publish; the digital divide, which includes physical, financial, cognitive, content and political aspects; academic information in southern Africa, and its relation to water, the key strategic resource of the whole area; and Avanti, the web-based "articles-on-demand" service at UCSD. Posters covered a range of topics, including various locally-developed databases; metadata resources; and an e-book survey, which concluded that at this time e-books offer very little of relevance for marine and freshwater science.

In sessions parallel to the main sessions, country and institution reports from Europe, Asia and Africa were also presented. A dominant theme for whole conference, as usual in this international group of librarians, many from isolated places, was resource sharing and networking. The week after my return home, I received a request from a UCSB researcher for an obscure German publication, so I sent a message to the

IAMSLIC Listserver. Within hours, I received four offers to send it to me, three of them from German librarians who had been in Brest at the conference.

On the fourth day the conference moved to IFREMER (Institut française de Recherche pour l'Exploitation de la Mer) (<http://www.ifremer.fr/francais/>) and CEDM (Centre de Documentation sur la Mer), where IFREMER scientists described their current research in biotechnology, geosciences, and resources exploitation of the deep sea. IFREMER is the largest oceanographic research center in France, and possibly Europe, with facilities at Brest, and in 23 other places in France and overseas. Experiments were described on the biotechnology of extremophiles, organisms living under high pressure and high temperature in the deep sea near hydrothermal vents. Scientists are investigating the possibilities of using extremophiles for bioremediation. Because of the difficulties in investigating these organisms in the deep sea (*in situ*) or in culture in test tubes (*in vitro*) many experiments are performed in computer simulation (*in silico*). Scientific information management and IFREMER computer facilities were also discussed and the director of CEDM gave a tour of the center's new building, due to open soon.

After 4 days of intense meetings, we had a day-long tour, first visiting Océanopolis (<http://www.oceanopolis.com/>), a very impressive aquarium that has become one of the prime tourist attractions in Brittany (Bretagne). The aquarium has separate sections for temperate, tropical and polar exhibits. Afterwards we visited various parts of Brittany, including the western edge of France at Pointe de Pen-Hir, and the medieval town of Quimper (*Kemper* in Breton), with interesting museums, architecture, and pottery. Brittany is obviously proud of being more Breton than French, with bilingual signs, Celtic music and art, and distinctive architecture. The people were friendly and helpful, even to those of us speaking fractured French.

Throughout the week we had great food and wine, at receptions, a splendid and sumptuous banquet, and many restaurants. The meetings were very successful and we came home with more information, and more friends added to personal networks.

The next IAMSLIC Conference will be held in October 2002 in Mazatlan, Mexico.

* Adapted from: Markham, J.W. (2001). "IAMSLIC/EURASLIC 2001: Brest, France." *Library Waves*, UCSB Library: the Newsletter of the Employees of the Libraries at UC Santa Barbara November/December 2001 [<http://www.library.ucsb.edu/libwaves/nov01/iamslc2001.html>].